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Agenda item 7

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE AND DOCUMENTATION, INCLUDING THE QUESTION OF THE FINAL OUTCOME

Letter dated 14 September 1992 from the Chairperson of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women addressed to the Secretary-General of the World Conference on Human Rights

With reference to the preparatory work for the World Conference on Human Rights, I have the pleasure to bring to your kind attention the views and decisions of CEDAW during the eleventh session held in January 1992, on the matter of the World Conference on Human Rights and the womens issue.

In its suggestion 3, CEDAW requested that the issue of equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by women should be fully reflected in the agenda of the World Conference on Human Rights as reflected in A/CONF.157/PC/23.

Equally, the Committee requested that the global issue of reservations to human rights conventions should be placed on the agenda of the World Conference on Human Rights.

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The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women had the highest number of reservations of all the international human rights treaties.. Most of the reservations were worded so generally that it was difficult to determine what was being reserved and what impact the reservation would have on the obligations to eliminate discrimination against women assumed by the reserving countries.

CEDAW also passed recommendation 20 inviting States parties, in connection with the preparation for the World Conference on Human Rights, to raise the questions of the validity and the legal effect of reservations to the Convention in the context of reservations to other human rights treaties.

In its recommendation 19, CEDAW considered gender-based violence as a form of discrimination that seriously inhibits women's ability to enjoy rights and freedoms on a basis of equality with men. The final draft of the declaration on eliminating violence against women affirms that violence nullifies the enjoyment by women of human rights and that women's opportunity to achieve legal, social, political and economic equality in society is limited by continuing violence.

I would be grateful if these recommendations and views by CEDAW could be brought to the attention of the Preparatory Committee and considered through the appropriate procedure.

(signed) Mervat Tallawy
Chairperson